



*Black & Pink*



a family of  
LGBTQ  
prisoners and  
"free world"  
LGBTQA allies  
who support  
each other

## SEPTEMBER 2012 NEWSLETTER

Dear friends,

I hope this note finds you all as well as possible. You may have noticed, as of late, that we have been a little bit behind or all over the place with our newsletter and other things you have requested from us. Firstly, I appreciate your patience and generous kindness to us as volunteers. We are, it would seem, getting more on top of everything due to great volunteer coordination and an increase in time from multiple individuals. With our new office space, partnership with Queers for Economic Justice, and other growth it would seem that we are moving forward well. It is incredibly exciting to reach 1,500 people inside the prison walls each month with the newsletter and your active participation in spreading the word has helped that growth incredibly. Thank you for helping our family grow. We also always appreciate the notes you write to us, the stamps you send to help cover costs, and the thank you cards you create for our donors. If you feel so inclined to volunteer in other ways with Black and Pink, we would love your ideas. If we can help you grow things where you are, let us know. When you send letters simply address it to Black and Pink – Volunteer and we will be more than glad to accept your gifts and ideas for volunteering. We exist as a family because we all participate in the ways that we can and know how. It is always best if we push ourselves out of our comfort zones some and reach out towards something transformative.

While September functions as "Back-to-School" month for so many people it inspires in me a reminder that we must constantly be talking about the realities of the school-to-prison-pipeline.



This terminology is tossed around regularly in social justice and non-profit spaces but we seem not to actually be addressing the realities of this disastrous trajectory. Schools are filled with police as hall monitors. Students walk through metal detectors in order to get into class. Zero-tolerance policies lead to young people getting suspended and expelled to

school with no resources available to them. Rather than learning transformative knowledge, students are taught to take tests, follow rules, or be punished with isolation and even state surveillance/control. How many of you have a high school diploma or a GED? How many of you have had a bunky who was not able to read or write well? How many of you see broken schools leading to young people getting locked up? The Black and Pink office is now located in a space occupied by a radical social justice youth leadership organization. These young people can talk brilliantly about how the prison industrial complex has seeped into the school walls and poisoned a place of learning. They know what it means for them to have police walking the halls. Studies are coming out that show LGBTQ young people are more likely to be harshly punished, suspended, and expelled than their heterosexual and gender conforming peers. Our family is under attack in school and this leads to far too many of them, as you well know, getting swallowed up by prisons and jails. What wisdom do you have to share with young people? What knowledge would you want to impart to grade school kids who are struggling to keep themselves in classes?

I want to close by acknowledging the Jewish High Holidays of September. Rosh Hashanah is the celebration of the New Year, the beginning anew, the start of the religious calendar. This holiday is marked by the blowing of the Shofar, the rams horn, during the readings from Numbers and Exodus. The holiday is from September 16<sup>th</sup> at sunset til nightfall; on September 18<sup>th</sup>. Rosh Hashanah is quickly followed by Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, beginning sundown on the 27<sup>th</sup> and ending at sundown on the 28<sup>th</sup>. This is the time to take account of the sins of the past year, the places where we failed, the moments when we were less than our whole selves, and to ask for forgiveness while also committing to live differently. This holiday is an opportunity to search for personal and communal authenticity. I think of it as bigger than just ourselves. I will take account of the fact that prisons continue to exist, one of the greatest sins of this country. I will honor this religious season knowing that once there were no prisons, that day will come again. With love and solidarity,  
Jason

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Dear Brothers and Sisters of Black & Pink,

Last week I stood up in front of a predominantly Christian community composed of over a hundred people and made a speech in regards to persecution. It was no small task. A couple of weeks prior to that event I was moved out of a dorm I was comfortable in because a guy who prompted me several times concerning the

same issue was turned down. He was mad and wrote several kites with miscellaneous threats to get me moved, and eventually it worked. Basically I'm at one of those units that discriminate against homosexuals and assume the worst of us. Prior to myself, there were homosexuals at this unit, labeled queens, who abused the favoritism of ranking officials, and I'm getting the shit end of it. Time and time again it causes me depression, even to this day, because I feel all alone and all by myself.

Harassment comes in several forms. Despite the fact that I'm case free and at my lowest line class, I'm refused any job I ask for when other inmates are granted jobs requested. I've been moved all over the unit due to he-said/she-said hearsay type of bullshit and empty J-60 threats with

### JULY 1993 - CHRISTIAN CENTURY



no signature. Sometimes when I sit at a table in the Inmate Dining Room, inmates try to do all types of tricks not to land at the same table. While some guys secretly shoot me notes, the same guys publicly slander me due to my sexual preferences. (You know- fronting :( ). Everyday there's some new shit I have to face and my hurdles and obstacles of life seem to get more difficult. I sure in hell can't do it alone, but it's my faith, knowledge, wisdom, and understanding that sustains and allows me to keep going, no matter the circumstances.

You guys have supported me, nevertheless, through so many newsletters along with my other magazine. I find that it's not rare for a homosexual like me, a minority, to be persecuted against. Even more so, I realize that my situation is not as bad as most. I've seen and have heard of it all over the news, newspaper, and though word of suicides, especially among teens, because of the persecution they face due to whatever their sexual preference is, or because their beliefs and opinions differ from that of a majority. But what you are, who you are, how you are along with wherever you are should never, ever change. The real you is what makes you unique, real, and distinct from anyone else. Some guys and gals are wanting to come out of the closet, but fear the feedback they'll receive from family, friends, associates, and various types of people in general. Don't hide, but take pride! Be proud to have made a decision that is unpopular to the majority. We only make homosexuality taboo when we hide. We secretly say there's something shameful and embarrassing, even though it may not be our intentions to do so.

A friend of mine currently stated, "People fear what they don't understand, and therefore hate what they fear." It really doesn't matter if a person doesn't understand you, but you obviously can't expect people to like you if they don't understand or truly know you. Everyone also has different philosophies and differing points of view, and where you have haters, you also have congratulators and vice versa. There are polar opposites to every situation. When it comes down to the nitty gritty, it's better to have one or a selected few real friends than a whole lot of fake, use-till-you-abuse type of associates. If you'd know me, there's always at least one guy who will be there for me in the whole crowd, and that one guy will always be the most true person that I know. When it comes down to it, that's all that really matters.

**Be encouraged and strong with who you are. In this extremely variable world, there is someone out there that either is exactly as you are, or is someone who needs someone like you.** Keep me in your heart, thoughts, and prayers, for without the love and support I get, I can not fully function on the love I need for myself.

Sincerely Yours,  
Jessie, Texas

Dearest Black & Pink Family,

Hello, I joined the family last year in August and have really been blessed by it! The articles and letters from other B&P Family members really have helped me through some really dark days here in prison.

Last year in November, I was raped twice by two different men from the same gang. When I tried to report the first rape, I tried to report it to a Warden and Captain who were standing in front of the chow hall, and was told to quit lying and go back to my dorm. The second rape happened about 2 weeks later and I believe that it was done in retaliation for trying to report the first one. I never reported the second one because of the belief that nothing would be done as what happened with the attempt to report the first rape, and the fact that I was threatened by the second rapist that if I told, worse would happen the next time so I was afraid for my life.

I am a 37 year old gay white male who is also a pacifist. When these guards look at me they don't believe I am a pacifist because I am stocky and have tattoos.

About 6 months after the rapes, I was finally able to get transferred to another unit by religious means. When I arrived at my new unit, I reported the rapes and was put into Solitary for protection during the investigation. Well, after a short investigation, I was told that my allegations were found unsubstantiated due to lack of evidence. I told them I had tried to report the first rape right after it happened, but they don't believe me. I had also filed for Life in Danger because if I go back to General Population, the gang who the rapists belonged to will come after me for "snitching" their fellow member out for raping me. My Life in danger filings have been dismissed 3 times already and since I had asked to be put on Safekeeping, the administration on my current unit believes I'm just trying to go there to find a lover! After being raped almost 8 months ago, I am not interested in any relationship except maybe friendship at this moment. All I care about at this time is to be safe and the only way that can be is if I am on Safekeeping, which I am being denied.

At this moment an investigation has been opened up on my ordeal concerning my allegations of the rapes and my life endangerment from the gang the rapist belonged to by the PREA Ombudsman office here in Texas, thanks to the urging from my family. I have also contacted the organization Just Detention International and told them everything that has happened to me. I hope that something will happen with this that will help me be safe. That's all I've asked for, is to be safe from anymore retaliation from the gang that the rapist belonged to.

I would truly appreciate any help in staying safe- advice, advocacy, or legal help. My family is struggling to make ends meet and can't afford much.

Thank you for everything you have done Black & Pink! I know I am not the only one your Newsletter has helped. Thanks also to the Black & Pink family and anybody else who has helped to make the organization what it is today. I love all of you!!

Hugs & Kisses,  
Chris, Texas

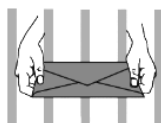
Dear Black & Pink,

This is Jack AKA Speedy or J. LOVE. It really hurt me to my heart when I read the June 2012 issues of the B&P Newsletter. Juicy, Pennsylvania. Sun, Texas. Jessica, Texas. KE.CHOW, California. Deon, California. Crash, Texas. I feel ya'll pain, don't let anything or anyone stop you from being happy. It's not cookies and cakes here in Florida. We catch hell as well and I don't let their foolish ways get me down at all and never will.

We must reach out to the free world and let people know what is going on and how much of a help they can be for all of us LGBTQ Black & Pink Family. If any of you have family or friends on the outside, see if they will set up a Facebook page for you. So you can send letters, notes, poems, and ect. To your page about what's going on behind the walls. A Twitter page will help as well.

Black & Pink doing all they can for all of us. But we must help ourselves as well. Now if you don't have any family or friends in the free world to help get a Facebook or Twitter page, then I'm letting all of you know about the following address for a Free Blog page. It doesn't cost anything- they will give you a Blog page on the internet, can can send poems, letters, stories, pictures, drawings, and so forth and they will put on your Blog at no cost to you at all. Just write and tell them you would like your own Blog page and to please send you all the information and paperwork you need to get started.

Between the Bars  
Attn: Mr. Charles Detar  
PO Box 425103  
Cambridge, MA 02142



**Between the Bars**  
Human stories from prison

We all must get word out there in the Free World that where it counts to all my Brothers and Sisters. If you have anyone on the outside to call our State leaders and stay on there ass 24/7, believe me something will get done about it. It won't work if just 10 or 20 people do it. It will take all of us as a whole to make a difference.

I love you all,  
Jack aka Speedy, Florida

Editor's Note: Speedy and a few others have asked if the newsletter submissions get posted on the Black & Pink website. We post the Newsletter each month on the website, so anything that is in the Newsletter sent to you all can be read on the Newsletter posted to our website. For this reason, we do not include last names of those who submit pieces.

Dear Black & Pink Family,

My name is EAriel. It is my Spiritual name given to me in a Dream by God. I am a 34 year old gay male currently doing a life sentence in North Dakota under a wrongful conviction of murder. All because I refused to be someone's scapegoat. Though that is all neither here nor there. God will take care of me.

In reading letters submitted by my Brothers and Sisters of the GLBTQ society, I got into thinking of my own "coming out" as it were.

For myself, I have always been gay. As far back as I can remember. Had my first boyfriend when I was only 13 years old. I always "knew" my parents suspected I was gay. Mom even tried to catch me a few times. Glad for locks on the door. Was even questioned a couple times if I was gay. Which I would always adamantly give a strong "no" to. For to be gay in my family was not a good thing.

As life progressed on, I joined the Army some years later. It was strongly suspected even then that I was gay. Though with Don't Ask, Don't Tell in place, one kept pretty quiet.

After leaving the Army, I got involved in driving truck. The big 18-wheelers. Going from state to state. I loved to travel. See different places. Meet different people. Plus, it kept myself away from everyone else. People will do strange things to keep a secret quiet.

Then I ended up here. As prisons go, it is by far the best. Especially for being gay. For, yes, there are ignorant bigots, though you get pretty well left alone.

It was while here in prison, I finally got right with God. Which is kind of a long story in itself. Though in doing so, I have come to understand something. That God truly loves everyone. No matter who you are. Here is the thing in it all. One of the greatest lessons God has taught me was to be honest with myself. If I cannot do that, how can I be honest with anyone else? As a Great Man once said, "To Thine Own Self Be True."

So I finally "came out" to my family. Was actually quite surprised. Was not at all what I had suspected. In fact, it was quite the opposite. The main response was "It is about time." And "We already knew." Well hell, if I would have known this, I would have done this quite some time ago.

The moral of it all is this. Be who you are. Be proud of who you are. While many of us are in prison, keep your head held high. It is not always clear why God puts us where we are. There is a Greater Purpose in it all. And when things seem to get dark, remember, even the Roses need rain to grow. Take it all one day at a time as God gives it to you. Yesterday is gone, returned to God. And tomorrow has yet to come, still belonging to God.

And remember, everything happens for a reason. Whether we can understand it or not. Whether it is good or bad comes a lot from how we choose to let it be.

I continually pray for all my Brothers & Sisters. May you find Joy and Happiness in all you do.  
-EAriel, North Dakota

## Set Our Differences Aside

To all my Brothers and Sisters,  
in a jail house dorm.  
Trying to come together,  
and weather the storm.

It's not easy,  
to set our differences aside.  
And to see our real enemies,  
that keeps us so blind.



We fight one another,  
and cut each other down.  
But how can this help us,  
when we are face down.

But then we must,  
pick ourselves up.  
And face the fact,  
that we can't win when we act like that.

We must learn to stand together,  
and watch each other's back.  
And not turn on one another,  
nor stab our friend in the back.

But do you know who your real enemy is,  
in this man made hell.  
Surely no one in a jumpsuit,  
For in this place we should all be as one.

Now, I have only one question,  
Why do we hurt each other so?  
The question I can't answer,  
but I can say, "There is hope!"

For a life of peace,  
in this wasted world.  
If we could just be as one,  
and try to be better than none!

Rosie, Texas

# Andy's Coming Out Story

I wish that my coming out story could be considered typical, but to say that it is would be a lie. So with that in mind, here is my "coming out" story.

My story begins when I was in grade school at the age of 8. I knew then that I was "different" from the other kids in school in that I did not find myself attracted to girls. I didn't know it then, but you could say that I was gay from then on out. At the age of 10, I had my first boy-to-boy encounter with a male friend of mine who is no longer with us. At the age of 13 (and here is where things turn not typical), I was sent to a Mental Health Institute (thereafter called "MHI") for some issues that I was having at the time. During my time there, I had encounters with several of my friends on the down low. I know THEN that I was really gay and that I was in NO way attracted to the females that were also there at the MHI. I must warn you that what I am about to write is the most difficult part of this letter that I have to type, sitting here in the library of the prison I am at as we speak. With that being said, here goes the rest of my story.

When I was 15, I decided that it was finally time to come out to my mother. I was still at the MHI, so I talked to my counselor about it and between the two of us, we decided that it was the best thing to do under the circumstances. One day, mom came to visit as she did whenever she got the chance. I told her when she arrived that my counselor and I needed to talk to her in the office. I took her back to the counselor's office and told her that what I was about to say was going to be very difficult. When I finally got the courage, I told her in

no uncertain terms that I was gay and had been for several years. I still remember to this day over ten years later the look on her face. After what seemed like eternity, she said "I want you to know, son, that no matter what, I will always love you." I wish that I could say that she fully approved of my being gay, but that would also be a lie. She tolerated it to an extent, but never fully approved. Mom passed away in August of 2007, but I know that she always loved me and continues to love me in Heaven. I don't know who my father is, so that is why he is not mentioned in this story.

In closing, I just want to say this: No matter what your story might be, remember that you are loved no matter what. Also remember that God loves you as well. Keep your head high, knowing that once there were no prisons and that day will soon come again. Peace and Love :)

I will  
ALWAYS  
love you

Yours in Christ,  
Andy, Iowa

Dear Black & Pink,

I wanted to share a resource with everyone called PASS: Prisoner Assistance Scholastic Service. "PASS is done through the mail. PASS confers a degree that can be used as evidence of rehabilitation before parole boards and with prison officials." They have courses in Victim Awareness, Anger Management, Addiction & Substance Abuse, Domestic Violence, Gang Diversion, Conflict Resolution, Parenting, Non-violent Communication, Re-entry into Society, and Living with Purpose. Write to: PASS, POB 2009, San Francisco, CA 94126.

Furthermore, for my Tranny sisters in TDCJ (Texas Dept of Criminal Justice), if any of you are having problems with obtaining your medications that you take to transition, you need to go to the Law Library (if you cannot attend due to custody, you can ask for it to be delivered (indirect access request)), and ask to review the "correctional Managed Health Care Policy Manual", Policy number G-51.11 "Treatment of Offenders with Gender Disorders." This has been in effect since January 2006.

I hope all this has been and will be helpful to everyone.

In Solidarity and Shalom,  
Umberto, Texas

# HEART

*I dedicate this poem to my Best Friend*

It all starts with a single heart  
That's unique and does its part.

It is always there and will never fail  
To carry us through times of living hell.

It is always there to help us cope  
When there seems to be no ray of hope.

It is always there through and through  
Especially when we're feeling blue.

It is always there to cure our pain  
And to pull us through the toughest rain

It is always there to lend a hand  
To change our lives, and help us expand.

It is always there when we are in need  
To give its love without greed.

It is always there anytime, anyplace  
That's why this smile is on my face.

So next time a friend needs a fresh start  
Show them Love and show them your heart.

-Scott aka Fantasy, New York

## The Promise

Though my love for you flows so Divine  
I can't believe that I left you behind  
For I know that promise that I made to you...  
That I'd never leave you  
Nor let you go through  
So, let go of the things that will only bring you down in time  
And cling to my love, that is one of a kind  
This is what I pray each day  
That soon we'll be together  
So that our love will not fade  
Just remember the promise I made!

Much love to my B-day Boy!  
-Polo, Texas

## My Soul Needs Rest

As you have a Reluctant Soul  
as the body gets old

The blood still flows through your veins  
but the Heart will never be the same

As the Heart is the center of your being,  
as the inner Soul lingers

You must endure until the last,  
this is the task set before you  
and once it's complete  
you know the only Road home  
as my Soul needs Rest!

Rose, Texas

## Male Bonding

As delicious as a triple chocolate cake-  
With cream cheese icing.

As sensuous as the caress of Persian silk-  
Across a supple firm buttock.

It is not taboo-

To do what lovers do,  
Regardless what lie they told you.

As natural as the bees that produce honey-  
Is the camaraderie we share.

Kindred- like so many others-  
In this planetary amusement park.

**Release the shame-**

**Throw off the guilt.**

**Become your complete self-  
Confident and secure.**

We haven't chosen anything-

At least no more than "they" have.

We were designed in the cosmos-

Exactly as we were meant to be.

Masterpieces of flawed perfection-  
Equals in this human race.

-Patrice, Illinois



# Judge Rules Michelle Kosilek Deserves Surgery

By Denise Lavoie, The Associated Press, 9/4/12

BOSTON — State prison officials must provide taxpayer-funded sex-reassignment surgery to a transgender inmate serving life in prison for murder, because it is the only way to treat her "serious medical need," a federal judge ruled Tuesday.

Michelle Kosilek was born male but has received hormone treatments and now lives as a woman in an all-male prison. Kosilek was named Robert when married to Cheryl Kosilek and was convicted of murdering her in 1990. U.S. District Judge Mark Wolf is believed to be the first federal judge to order prison officials to provide sex-reassignment surgery for a transgender inmate. Kosilek first sued the Massachusetts Department of Correction 12 years ago. Two years later, Wolf ruled that Kosilek was entitled to treatment for gender-identity disorder but stopped short of ordering surgery. Kosilek sued again in 2005, arguing that the surgery is a medical necessity. In his 126-page ruling Tuesday, Wolf found that surgery is the "only adequate treatment" for Kosilek and that "there is no less intrusive means to correct the prolonged violation of Kosilek's Eighth Amendment right to adequate medical care."

Prison officials have repeatedly cited security risks in the case, saying that allowing Kosilek to have the surgery would make her a target for sexual assaults by other inmates. But Wolf, who was appointed to the federal bench by President Ronald Reagan in 1985, found that the security concerns are "either pretextual or can be dealt with." He said it would be up to prison officials to decide how and where to house Kosilek after the surgery. Diane Wiffin, a spokeswoman for the prisons department, said the agency would have no immediate comment on the ruling. "We are reviewing the decision and exploring our appellate options," Wiffin said.

In a telephone interview last year with The Associated Press, Kosilek said the surgery is a medical necessity, not a frivolous desire to change her appearance. "Everybody has the right to have their health care needs met, whether they are in prison or out on the streets," Kosilek said. "People in the prisons who have bad hearts, hips or knees have surgery to repair those things. My medical needs are no less important or more important than the person in the cell next to me." Wolf noted that the Department of Correction's own medical experts testified that they believe surgery was the only adequate treatment for Kosilek.

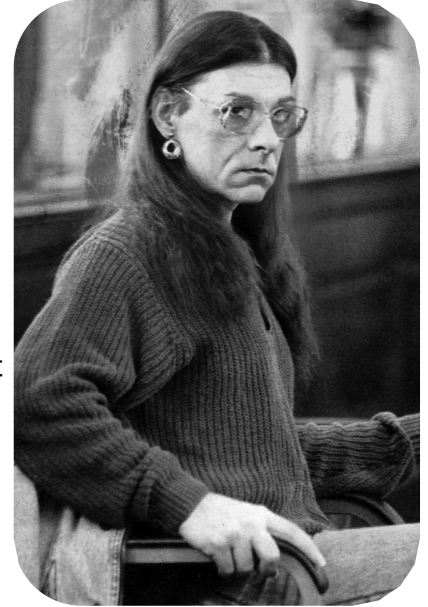
The department's ex-commissioner Kathleen Dennehy testified that giving Kosilek the surgery would present insurmountable security concerns, but Wolf said the inmate had proven that those purported concerns masked the real reason for denying surgery: "a fear of controversy, criticism, ridicule and scorn."

Kosilek's lawsuit has become fodder for radio talk shows and Massachusetts lawmakers who say the state should not be forced to pay for a convicted murderer's sex-change operation — which can cost up to \$20,000 — especially since many insurance companies reject the surgery as elective. [...]

Inmates in Colorado, California, Idaho and Wisconsin have sued unsuccessfully to try to get the surgery, making similar arguments that denying it violates the U.S. Constitution's protection against cruel and unusual punishment. Wolf noted that Kosilek's gender-identity disorder has caused her such anguish that she has tried to castrate herself and twice tried to commit suicide.

Kosilek's lead attorney, Frances Cohen, called the decision courageous and thoughtful. "We feel very grateful that the judge listened very carefully to the medical experts and has given Michelle Kosilek what the prison doctors had recommended," Cohen said. Ben Klein, a senior attorney at the Boston-based legal group Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, said Wolf's ruling recognizes what some medical experts have said for years: that sex-reassignment surgery can be a "legitimate life-saving medical treatment for transgender people."

Klein said other inmates seeking the surgery can cite Wolf's ruling, but they would still have to prove that prison officials showed deliberate indifference to their medical needs. "Not everybody will be able to prove it, but at the same time, the prisons' decisions have to be based on proper medical care and not bias," Klein said. In Kosilek's case, the judge said, female hormones have "helped somewhat," but the inmate "continues to suffer intense mental anguish" because she truly believes she is a woman trapped in a man's body. "That anguish alone constitutes a serious medical need," Wolf wrote. "It also places [her] at high risk of killing herself if his major mental illness is not adequately treated."





# Ophelia De'Lonta's Fight for Surgery!

Advocate.com By Charles Hicks July 05 2012 (Retitled by B&P)

An endocrinologist has recommended full gender reassignment surgery for a Virginia inmate seeking a state-funded transition from male to female.

Christina Gherghe, MD, of the University of Virginia suggested this week that prison doctors perform a orchiectomy — the surgical removal of the testicles — for Ophelia De'Lonta. Gherghe was hired by the state to provide a recommendation in De'Lonta's case.

De'Lonta, who has served 33 years of a 70-year sentence for robbery, drugs and weapons charges, filed a lawsuit against the state in 2011 for failing to treat her gender identity disorder. De'Lonta has already attempted self-castration, and required 21 stitches following her attempt. The 51-year-old has not ruled out another self-castration attempt if the state rules against state-funded gender-reassignment surgery.

Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli is expected to oppose Gherghe's analysis, according to NBC12 News, since the state has said gender-reassignment surgery is not the only treatment method for gender identity disorder.

If the Virginia department of corrections rules in De'Lonta's favor, it will be the first time the state of Virginia has funded a sex-change operation.



## Remembering the Attica Rebellion

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/attica-prison-riot-ends>

A four-day riot at Attica Prison comes to a violent end as law enforcement officials open fire, killing 29 inmates and 10 hostages and injuring many more. The prison insurrection was the bloodiest in U.S. history.

On the morning of September 9, 1971, a group of inmates at the Attica Correctional Facility, a maximum-security prison in western New York, assaulted a prison guard and began rioting. They took prison employees hostage and gained control of portions of the facility. Negotiations between inmates and prison officials followed. The inmates demanded better living conditions at the overcrowded prison, which had been built in the 1930s. At the inmates' request, a committee of observers that included politicians and journalists was formed to oversee the talks.

When negotiations broke down, New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller ordered Attica to be taken by force. Rockefeller was planning to run for the Republican presidential nomination and reportedly wanted to combat the perception in some circles that he was soft on crime. On the morning of September 13, tear gas was dropped over the prison and state troopers opened fire on a group of over 1,200 inmates. In the chaos, 10 hostages and 29 inmates were killed by police gunfire and another 80 people were seriously wounded, the majority of them inmates, in what became the bloodiest prison uprising in U.S. history. Adding to the death toll were three inmates and a guard who had been killed earlier during the riot.



Some inmates later claimed that police took brutal revenge on them and that they were denied medical care for hours afterward. An investigation into the Attica revolt resulted in over 60 inmates being indicted and eight eventually convicted. One prison guard was charged with reckless endangerment, but his case was later dropped. A class-action suit filed in the 1970s on behalf of over 1,200 Attica inmates was settled in 2000 when a federal judge ordered New York State to pay \$8 million to the surviving inmates. In 2005, the state also agreed to pay

\$12 million to the survivors and families of employees killed at Attica.



# Colombian Prison Strikes Continue

*Alliance for Global Justice, August 31, 2012*

Strikes involving thousands of prisoners at 21 institutions continue in Colombia against the humanitarian crisis in the jails. [...] Torture is so commonplace in the jails that a 2008 study by Colombia's Committee in Solidarity with the Political Prisoners showed that when asked if the inmates had been tortured at least once during their jail time, 54% answered they had and 46% did not answer the question at all. Eighty-six percent said that they had experienced psychological torture, including threats to relatives and simulated executions.

[...] In 2000, the US Ambassador signed an agreement with the Colombian Minister of the Interior named the Program for the Improvement of the Colombian Prison System (PICPS). Under the PICPS, the US would help build a series of new prisons to create a "New Penitentiary Culture". This effort has been funded and

advised via USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and the US Bureau of Prisons.

[...] New jail construction has been less about relieving overcrowding than preparing for a much larger prison population as a result of social and economic disruption and punishing political dissent. With passage of the US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement many observers fear that poverty rates will worsen and crimes of desperation and prison populations will increase. Unfortunately, US and Colombian authorities see the "New Penitentiary Culture" as a model and are seeking to replicate it in Central America (where in Honduras the US has announced a new "Model Penitentiary" program) and Mexico (where the US is funding construction of 16 new federal prisons).



In 2010, Raquel Mogollón, a member of the Alliance for Global Justice "Colombia Watch" working group, had the chance to visit La Tramacúa with a delegation of Colombian legislators and international human rights defenders. According to Mogollón, "...Inmates say they're getting access to water about ten minutes a day. However, in the cells there is water...disgusting, dirty water on the floors. The prison was absolutely, suffocatingly hot with just a few water pipes. What was really bad—I got a look at the water bottles. They were all full of mold. They aren't able to clean their water jugs. There's just not enough water available. At one point, you could hear the water coming through the pipes. All the men started running.... The whole place smelled. They said it was cleaned up for us. Mostly, it smelled like urine. They said the bags of feces had been gotten rid of.... The kitchen area was totally dark. They said they'd cleaned that up, too, but it wasn't that clean. There were three fans and ten giant cauldrons where they were cooking some soup or stew. In the other room where they prepared the food, it was full of flies. There was grease all over the floor. It didn't smell very good. I saw vegetables and fruit that were spoiled in the preparation area, with flies all around them."

Since the beginning of the PICPS, there has been a series of prisoner strikes against such conditions. More often than not they have been violently repressed. Beginning on August 2, 2012, nonviolent resistance began that has included as many as 11,000 prisoners in 21 institutions and is still continuing. Prisoners have used a number of different tactics including hunger strikes, the refusal to participate in prison counts or work programs or to wear prison uniforms, and self-suspension from prison balconies and railings in make-shift hammocks and harnesses. The number one demand of the prisoners is that the Colombian government establish a National Board of Consultation that includes prisoner spokespersons in order to resolve the crisis in the jails.

## **The prisoners have formulated an additional five basic demands:**

1. Declare a Social and Humanitarian Emergency in Colombian jails;
2. Regionalize prisoners in institutions near their families;
3. Reduce all sentences by 20% and increase the use of alternative sentences such as home detention;
4. Resolve problems of health, sanitation and overcrowding;
5. End the extradition of prisoners to foreign countries (which is interfering with Colombia's internal peace process and in ongoing investigations of links between paramilitary death squads and Colombian politicians).

The response of the Colombian Bureau of Prisons (INPEC) has so far been yet more repression and neglect. [...].

**Keep in Touch w/ Black & Pink**  
**Black & Pink—{Insert topic tag here}**  
**c/o Community Church of Boston**  
**565 Boylston Street**  
**Boston, MA 02116**



If you would like to request:	Please use this topic tag, and we'll do our best:
<b>Newsletter Subscriptions</b> (Start or Stop)	<b>Newsletter Subscriptions</b>
<b>Newsletter Submissions</b> (Poems & Stories)	<b>Newsletter Submissions</b>
<b>"Outside" Free Pen-Pal Ad form request</b>	<b>Pen-Pal</b>
<b>Address Change</b> (Will take time to update; at this time, we are mostly unable to send back issues.)	<b>Address Change</b>
<b>Black &amp; Pink Organization Feedback</b>	<b>Developing Leadership</b>
<b>Request Erotica</b>	<b>Erotica</b>
<b>Religious Support</b>	<b>Religion</b>
<b>Volunteering</b> (Send thank you cards to donors, etc.)	<b>Volunteer</b>
<b>Advocacy Requests</b> (include details about situation and thoughts about how calls or letters might help)	<b>Advocacy</b>

**LEGAL:** Consider writing to Lambda Legal for support or referrals with legal issues that you are having. "Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work."  
**Lambda Legal, National Office 120 Wall Street, Suite 1500, New York, NY 10005, 212-809-8585**

Another resource to turn to, if you can afford the subscription (\$24 yearly, payable with new stamps), is Prison Legal News. This resource was co-started by a former gay prisoner and Men Against Sexism organizer, Ed Mead, though now it is run by Paul Wright. You can reach them by writing to:  
**Prison Legal News, P.O. Box 2420, West Brattleboro, VT 05303**

**SURVIVORS:** Just Detention International provides support for prisoners who are survivors of sexual abuse. Write them at the legal address below for a packet. Each packet includes an introductory letter, a list of local resources, fact sheets, publications about recovery from sexual abuse, and a letter of hope from another survivor.  
**Ms. Chris Daley, Esq., 3325 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 340, Los Angeles, CA 90010**

**BLACKANDPINK.ORG**

**BLACKANDPINKMEMBERS@GMAIL.COM**

## Passion

We as females are full of passion  
of all extremes  
To share this passion with  
another woman  
What an exquisite feeling  
The hunger we feel for each other  
The need for one woman to be in the  
soft embrace of another woman  
What a beautiful need and hunger  
To have a desire to melt into another  
woman's body

Rhonda, Florida

